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## Swiss Scouts Prominent in World War

*Hans Jenny of University Faculty Was Scoutmaster in 1918, at Time  
When Patrol Units Attended Crops and Aided Refugees  
While Fathers Watched the Frontier*

**D**URING the World War, the Boy Scout organization was one of Switzerland's most useful institutions. When her thousands of men were drawn to the frontier in 1914, it became a vital organ in the economic and public welfare of the Swiss nation. In patrol units, Scouts worked the crops, attended the herds, and gathered the harvest. In fine, Boy Scouts upheld the economic machinery of the country while the fathers watched along the border.

To view the dramatic developments and the ravages of the World War from a sheltered position in the center of its bloodiest firing line, and to take part in the Scout work of Switzerland, was the unique privilege of Hans Jenny, assistant professor in the department of soils of the University of Missouri. Mr. Jenny, a native of Switzerland, spent four years on or near the frontier of his country when the armies of the earth milled and struggled around the borders of the little mountain republic for mastery of the heart of Europe.

Mr. Jenny has been in the United States for almost four years. He is an ardent Boy Scout enthusiast, having risen from a tenderfoot in the Scouts of Switzerland in 1913, to a scoutmaster in the same country in 1918.

In 1914, flanked on the north by Germany, on the South by Italy, on the west by France, and on the east by Austria, Switzerland was hard pressed to keep an army of sufficient strength to guard and protect her entire frontier. Although only sixteen years of age, Hans Jenny, like thousands of his youthful compatriots, answered the call. Thus it was that as a soldier of the army of Switzerland, and as a Boy Scout in the Swiss

organization, he was enabled to witness the struggle that involved the rise and fall of empires.

The Scouting movement began in Switzerland in 1912, three years after its successful American start. Through the opportunity offered it by the War, it has developed into a first class, highly efficient organization. Due to the fact that the uniforms of khaki that were adopted in Switzerland—uniforms similar to those used in America—clashed with the customs and beliefs of the people, for several years the organization met with a determined and aggressive opposition. The churches, various civic organizations, even the government itself, criticized the ideals and the rituals of the Scouts. Organizations of boys opposed and worked against the Boy Scouts.

But with the coming of the War and the resultant need of self-controlling units that could be depended upon, Scouting found its place in the hearts of the Swiss people. Scouts were used in locating homes for the great influx of orphan children that poured over the border from Austria, Germany, France, and Italy. The kindly Swiss people were ever ready to take the helpless children into their homes, but to do this it was first necessary to locate them, and second necessary for the children to find these homes.

For this great work, the Boy Scouts proved most valuable; and the benefit that millions of people reaped through their efforts can only be computed by making a survey of the homeless children that were placed, the hungry refugees that were fed, the number of helpless people that were materially assisted by the Scouts.

The wounded soldiers from every army in the field, and particularly

from the Italian and German armies, sought in Switzerland a refuge from the War. With surprising rapidity the towns became populated with these unhappy derelicts. The Boy Scouts were most helpful in caring for them and for administering to their needs.

There was something of a humorous touch to the situation when soldiers of one warring nation passively met their enemies in Switzerland. Good sportsmanship was not lacking, and not infrequently a strong friendship developed between soldiers of one government and their enemies, who, perhaps, had been wounded in the same battle. Sometimes too, there was animosity that ended in disorder, which the Swiss police were quick to punish.

One of the big problems of the Swiss army was the apprehending of political refugees, war prisoners, and the like, who came in a never-ending stream across the frontier from Italy, Germany, Austria, and France. The rule was

another was a member of the battery that had attempted to bring it down.

Scouting in Switzerland has nature for an ally. The great abundance of natural scenic beauty promotes a yearning for hiking and the other outdoor sports. Ski trips that last for days and weeks are popular sports. In the spring and summer hikes that cover many miles and that sometimes last for months are keen attractions. In a land where peaks, valleys, and high plateaus, break away into boulders, glaciers, and chasms, there is a vast wealth of opportunity for study and appreciation by the serious Scout. Mr. Jenny's hiking trips through the Alps, along the beautiful glaciers, in the St. Gaudard country, and elsewhere in Switzerland and Europe, are experiences of which one can be justly proud. He possesses a valued collection of souvenirs and pictures gathered on these trips.

The most hazardous of outdoor sports—scaling the precipices—is a goal the scouts set for them-

selves early in their lives. The picture of the slow moving mountaineers working up to the high peaks on rope chains, a picture that has become familiar to Americans through advertising agencies, is no uncommon spectacle to them.

Mr. Jenny, while a scout, accompanied his troop on many of these expeditions. Later, as a scoutmaster, he came to lead them.

"On one occasion," he recounts, "we were thirteen hours ascending a distance of scarcely a hundred feet, the goal being a signal on the top of one of Switzerland's most dangerous peaks, the Matterhorn. The route lay along the top of a peculiar formation thousands of feet above the surrounding mountain tops—a sheer drop of miles."

To such tasks as these

Switzerland Boy Scouts lean, inspired not only by the traditional customs of their fathers, but also by the urgings of their scoutcraft. Swiss parents, born and reared in the mountain highlands, never hesitate to allow their sons to accompany these perilous treks; more often they encourage them. Such is the innate outdoor spirit of the Swiss race.

The mountain lodges of the Swiss Scouts are built of stones, timber, and thatchwork, transported by the Scouts from the valleys below. Each lodge is a masterpiece in itself. Built back in the shelter of some towering cliff, often with the side of a precipice for a wall, these staunch little houses form snug depots for weary scout troops back from long hikes. For months at a time they are used—as in America—for the summer homes of the boys.

In winter, when the passes are deep in snow and often untraversable, the ski parties make these lodges their headquarters. In the Alps mountains a boy learns young to be dependent upon his own ability.

The medieval chateaux, buried in the most inaccessible parts of the mountains, are among the relics that scouts use for textbooks. Quaint chapels, built on some lonely peak, in some dense forest, or on an island in the middle of some swift moving mountain stream, form no end of rare and interesting novelty. Mr. Jenny has visited most of these structures in the company of his brother scouts. Trips for the purpose of covering the territories where these survivors of the middle ages may be found are part of the ritual followed by the scouts. Also, the glacier formations



Even three husky Swiss Boy Scouts can't hike all day without nourishment and rest.

followed that when these men were captured they were imprisoned in Swiss camps until the end of the war, after which they were returned to their homes.

Mr. Jenny, while with the army in the Jura Mountains on the northwestern border of Switzerland, often witnessed the engagements of the American and German troops. The Germans in their sector each morning sent up an observation balloon, upon which the Americans would promptly open fire. Every day the balloon was hauled down safely, to the discredit of the American gunners. Throughout his stay in this sector, Mr. Jenny can remember no successful shot which the Americans scored on the elusive airship. A few years ago, while attending the University of New Jersey, Mr. Jenny fell into conversation with several men who had seen service with the armies in Europe during the War. Upon explaining his relation to the War, Mr. Jenny mentioned the incident of the balloon. It developed that one of his listeners was the balloon observer, while



Nature shows partiality to Swiss Boy Scouts, who mountains, such as this, are excellent for hiking.

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